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ABSTRACT

This paper is an exploration of the philosophical and semiotic implications of educational acts of meaning-making that are mediated through narrative inquiry. The paper discusses the risks of a narrative view of teacher education as it is related to the "I"--philosophy tradition of Subjective Idealism. Indeed, modelling the Self may be an invitation to indoctrination. Thus, the paper offers deconstructive ways of critically analyzing stories of narrative educators which may prevent mere impositions of influence networks for the sake of personal awakening. Deconstruction is then characterized as a positive use of criticism to counterbalance the dialogically possible negative effects of constructive modelling. Deconstruction is understood as a complementary and necessary part of any constructive, structural process. As the critical arguments presented in the paper take the form of an essay, they suggest in their own formalism that narratological post-modern criticism may reveal useful moral avenues to deconstruct some Voice networks as being expressions of the self-authorized, narrative leadership of a few tenors and divas on an elitist stage. Also, as deconstruction is not meant to promote a network, it has to provide its own criticism. (Four figures and one table are included; 61 references are attached.) (Author/RS)

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Presence Beyond the Narrative:

Semiotic Tools for Deconstructing the Personal Story

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ABSTRACT

The present essay is an exploration of the philosophical and semiotic implications of educational acts of meaning-making that are mediated through narrative inquiry. This paper discusses the risks of a narrative view of teacher education as it is related to the "I"-philosophy tradition of the Subjective Idealism. Indeed, modelling the Self may be an invitation to indoctrination. Thus the paper offers deconstructive ways of critically analyzing stories of narrative educators which may prevent mere impositions of influence networks for the sake of personal awakening. Deconstruction is then characterized as a positive use of criticism to counterbalance the dialogically possible negative effects of constructive modelling. Deconstruction is understood as a complementary and necessary part of any constructive, structural process.

As the critical arguments presented here take the Form of an essay, they suggest in their own formalism that narratological Post-Modern criticism may reveal useful moral avenues to deconstruct some Voice networks as being expressions of the self-authorized, narrative leadership of a few tenors and divas on an elitist stage. Also as deconstruction is not meant to promote a network, it has to provide its own criticism.

I thank Sue, a Manitoba middle school teacher, for letting her diary pierce deconstruction.

Deconstruction should be understood as a positive use of criticism. It sheds light on the back-stage of constructed props. As educational models are also mental and social constructs, their critical understanding may seem to have a deconstructive, disillusioning effect even though this effect has positive implications. Actually, deconstruction is instrumental in the reflective construction of meaning. Construction and deconstruction are complementary processes. For example, in the last few years story maker has been emphasized as a major aspect of character construction. But story will not be complete if the place of the storymaker is not clearly situated. When we talk about human characters, personal stories and professional roles, story-making builds new dimensions in a real-life time and space. It may cure, help, fulfil and resolve; but it may also wreck the ship, cast all adrift and desh hopes on the reefs. What is then beyond the narrative? Illusion or Presence? Self or Doctrine? Semiotic tools have been developed to analyze texts; they apply to personal and social texts too. The narrative educational trend is a social text as well. Its deconstruction may help reveal its backstage: is narrative really constructive?

There certainly is an ambiguity in the title of the present essay. Does *Presence Beyond the Narrative* represent a result of the deconstruction process? If so, who is backstage? Doesn't deconstruction demonstrate rather a reaction against the imposture of a Presence behind the storied and restoried lives of teachers as expressed in their narratives? In effect, this ambiguity raises an issue on the stance taken in this article. As a story, narrative is past, and sometimes obsolete. It is never a present moment. Thus if there is a Presence, it lies probably beyond what is captured by stories. Some narrative educators emphasize awakening and the realization of an inner Presence. But the role of Presence in philosophy has long been a pretext for imposing absolute views in education. The point here is not that present things are <u>not</u>, or do not exist. They certainly *are*, and their existence may be verified. However, suggesting Presence, through or beyond individual story, has been an ideological argument for building indoctrination systems for centuries. How avoid this danger? It is suggested that, as a way of destorying events, deconstructive criticisms may provide useful, political instruments that demystify and invalidate the authority of narrative fundamentalists who claim that methodic awakening will be produced through an enlightening faith in the narrative tradition.

Thus deconstruction may provide a framework for narrative criticisms. But deconstruction should not become a goal in itself; it is not above its own deconstruction. If deconstruction must be, it has to have no permanent Presence by itself. It cannot then be assimilated with a method. Thus, so as to be meaningful, deconstruction should also be deconstructed when it has done its work; this metadeconstruction may free the idiosyncratic, ultimate Meaning from any attempt to legitimate an alleged, generalizable path to awakening. Metadeconstruction would provide criticisms of moral order.

This paper will use the deconstruction framework to discuss the following arguments:

1) The narrative approach in teacher education has not even begun to fully use the tools of narratology, even though this is one of its basic claims;

2) When transferred to the teacher's education, the narrative approach involves particular risks which must be acknowledged;

3) If the narrative approach consists in formalizing a new psychoanalytical path, it may then prevent more critical, social issues to emerge;

4) Self-awakening is by definition an individual, idiosyncratic experience; it may not be generalizable in a narrative approach: language differs from reality, culture from nature, and story making is probably only partially concerned with the perception of truth and meaning.

5) By setting aside the psychological perspective, the narratologic critics might help deconstruct ideology, and thus approach the individual autonomy with the least possible ideological imposition;

6) Deconstruction itself must be deconstructed in order to undermine its own ideological power.

This relativist approach denies the possibility of some metaphysical comfort. It implies that meaning is ever to be reconstructed, it does not reach a state of permanence.

Educational narratology: What philosophical roots?

As usually expressed in the educational field, the narrative approach traces its most important sources to the post-Hegelian, Deweyan educational philosophy -thus pragmatism- , in the biographic Chicago School, and in Polanyi's works on personal knowledge. Autobiography was certainly one of the first means used to study education; it has been temporarily rejected by behaviorists as being "mentalist". The experiential orientation of the narrative way of knowing makes it belong to the phenomenology tradition and to qualitative research trends (Eisner, 1985 and 1988). In the phenomenologic analysis of human experience, a phenomenon comes into existence when it receives a name. Large aspects of the world are ignored by conscious awareness; they remain at the prephenomenological level of the ever-present continuum of uncaptured life, untransformed into experience. Experience would come from the story humans make of it. For Structuralists and "I"-philosophers, experience would have "a past-future structure" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989a, p.5). Storying and restorying events would make human experience existing, shared, and cultural. In this Structural perspective, Story would allow victory over nature. In a Post-Structuralist perspective, however, story and nature are but Signs.

Two opposite stances have historically been taken regarding prephenomenological perceptions. The first stance may be called Idealistic as it implies an epistemological sense of "Idea-reality first", whether it be in the transcendentalist, Cartesian, Kantian and Husserlian, "I"-philosophy traditions (Subjective Idealism) or in the immanentist Spinozan and Hegelian, Metaphysical tradition (Objective Idealism). In this first stance, story is an object of awareness; there is a

presence beyond the narrative, ideas do preceed language. Underlying this position is the hypothesis of a higher order of knowledge that may be reached and constructed as an experience-encompassing identity or wholeness.

This constructive, structural view constrasts with the Post-Modern view that human perceptions are cultural entities. Indeed, the second, Post-Structuralist stance turns the usual picture of the world upside-down. It defines language categories and social meanings as the ultimate reality. In that perspective, "the priority of Culture over Nature now appears as a priority of the Sign over Objective Things, and the priority of Society over the Individual now appears as a priority of the Sign over Subjective Ideas" (Harland, 1987, p. 68). Although formalist (as were Plato's timeless Forms), the philosophical predominance of the Sign in the Post-Structuralism should not be interpreted in materialistic terms as would appear from the dualistic opposition Idealism/Materialism. In the Post-Structuralism, the Sign may express a meaningfulness which is neither idealistic nor materialistic as will be explained later in the discussion. The point of the foregoing considerations is to suggest that the narrative approach in education is inevitably integrated in some philosophical stance on the nature of Signs and Meanings. The perspective taken will have deep implications for the way it is destined to contribute to education, to educational innovation and to any supposed social or individual "awakening" if it does.

The narrative approach is not specific to educational sciences. Transposed into the educational world, narratives of experience indicate the way in which pupils and teachers as well as researchers story a life in constant motion, refining shared narratives supporting communities of thought (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). In this orientation, humans do not borrow their models from life but from the stories they collectively construct from events transformed into language. Humans would acquire identity from and through discourse (Egan, 1988; Butt, & Raymond, 1989; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Elbaz, 1991; Gudmundsdottir, 1991; Tochon, 1992).

Narrative inquiry may be *extradiscursive* (have an outward focus) when the viewpoint is external to the storied life: a teacher's biography may be reported by a colleague, an educator or a researcher; it is then involved in a dialogic frame where the story is progressively deepened and linked through multiple indexations. But narrative inquiry may well be autobiographical. It is then *intradiscursive* (have an inward focus) and the teacher (or the pupil, or the researcher) keeps her/his journal, its correspondance to oneself in a monological relationship: the narrative of experience is then close to the inner monologue, the construction of meaning is internal. As will be seen in this section, narrative inquiry has not used all the possibilities of narratologic criticism. Also, its interpretive frame of reference is usually Modern and Structuralist, rather than Post-Modern and Superstructuralist. In that sense, narrative inquiry has not fully developed its own contradictions (which may be enlightend by Post-Modern criticisms), nor has it yet exploited all its methodological tools. From a philosophical standpoint, narrative inquiry is most often framed in a traditionalist, idealistic perspective. On the one hand, it is story-centered and diachronic, historicist; on the other hand, it is molded by Hegelian presumptions about an absolute Truth underlying language and the Structural construction of a state of Permanence. This rigid assumption involves risks of paralysis and a schematism that have been emphasized by Post-Modern literature. Be it extradiscursive or intradiscursive (outward- or inward-directed), the

narrative inquiry is situated in a web of multifold goals. It cannot be systematically and entirely reconstructed in the ideal order and direction of some hypothetic Presence-to-Meaning, so that its tools would make it easy to be reached. For that reason, semiotic tools have always limited textual purposes. They are in-the-language whose meaning is always disseminated, and the way they provoke change may never be entirely circumscribed.

Data of narrative inquiry may be field notes of shared experiences, transcripts of semistructured interviews, stories of events and case studies. Actually, they correspond to an ethno-methodological, practice-centered orientation of research. Research criteria are a faithfulness to reality and the transferability of results (Van Maanen, 1990). Again, in these methodological guardrails, the difference between events-as-reported and events-as-lived is emphasized in a dualistic way that reflects to the above-mentioned contradiction between an idealistic, transcendent Presence, and a Wittgensteinian perspective on the embedment of language and facts. However, the narrative approach is claimed to be distinguished from models of technical rationality (Schon, 1987). The contemporaneous phenomenological perspective adopted by ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967; Schutz, 1967) would imply that the object of knowledge is not separate from the subject who is constructing its representation. On the theoretic level, this viewpoint should differ radically from the metacognitive as well as from the idealistic perspectives which are meant to target a transcendent knowledge on one's own knowledge. Rather, in the phenomenological perspective, meaning is in the context. This basic contrast seems to have been misunderstood by narrativists promoting awakening through self-storymaking; which tends to indicate, in Derrida's words, that they have been overwhelmed by their own Writing. The lack of coherence with their own philosophical roots may well have turned their story-crusade into trite novelist aesthetics.

In effect, a close look at the claims of narrative inquirers indicates a few paradoxes. They claim an interpretive philosophy which is in the line of Idealistic philosophers. Their Idealistic claim emphasizes the importance of awakening and an ultimate Meaning. It supplies the framework of interpretation for stories of the Personal. This first claim applies to the interpretive framework, that is the way narrative meaning is justified.

At the same time, a second, contrasting claim is made on the way methodology is handled. This second claim, even though not fully contradicting late Hegelian works and the metaphysical tradition of the Objecive Idealism, integrates aspects of Post-Modernity such as contextualized and interactive Meaning-making. In other words, the method is claimed to be Post-Modern while the Meaning to be reached through it is traditionally Idealistic. Also, the argument defending the approach is that of equality and sharing within communities, a Voice for the feeble and the oppressed (Munro, 1991); but the Voice is raised by the powerful, projecting guiding, irrefutable principles. At the present time, narrative inquiry is rooted in an ambiguous philosophical ground where Idealistic tendencies and social meaning are confused. This contradictory dualistic Voice resembles any governing political discourse, where lie and truth merge in universal statements, where delusion and secrecy are common practice.

Educational narratology: Which semiotic tools?

Earlier considered as a simplistic form of literacy (Di Pardo, 1990), the narrative comes back on the international stage as a means of knowledge-making in a mediated social discourse. The new emphasis on the personal aspect of knowledge-making (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; J. Shulman, 1991) calls for a reconsideration of narrative, and a devaluing of depersonalized, dehistoricized essay forms (Geisler, 1991). However, the narrative may at best become a personal and a social tool for reflecting situations, although it might prevent more critical actions from taking place (Bullough & Gitlin, 1989; Gitlin, 1990). On the personal level, life story and its expression come to be linked to episodic features having a psychological "depth" (Jung, 1964). Up to now, the narrative tools used for analyzing personal stories and symbols have mostly been related to metaphor analysis (Egan, 1988; Tobin & Ulerick, 1989; Tochon, 1990; Gudmundsdottir, 1990; Bullough, 1991). Not much has been done to deal with specific organizational patterns of personal texts, like text markers, signal words, framing categories, and story grammars. In this section, I propose to deal with semiotic tools that might be integrated with the educational narrative inquiry, as they belong to the realm of narratology.

The instruments of narrative inquiry mentioned in the literature concentrate on events rather than on general aspects of classroom life. An inductive approach is used for analyzing journal-keeping practices, interviews and fieldnotes. Note that these data collections do not usually arise from routine classroom practice and that they are mediated by or for the narrative inquirer. This approach provides a multi-level assessment and analysis on the basis of which a "shared narrative unity" is negotiated (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990, p.3). The scholarly technique for understanding narratives is usually a rough thematic analysis, on the basis of the researcher's active recording of how classroom events were constructed. The construction metaphor prevails and, as was said, without a critical deconstruction to parallel the discovery of patterns and structures, it may become mere manipulation or just creation. Actually, the instruments of narrative inquiry are very compatible with traditional content analysis techniques. Their originality is claimed principally in their involvement of dialogue in the construction of meaning, and some narratological aspect to it. The focus on events is not particularly specific of the narrative approach: it is an ethnomethodological orientation too, and a cognitive research one as well, as the memory pointers are easier to activate when short-term events are in awareness or when episodic memory is activated. Some allusions to *deixis* (space and time components in discourse) lead the reader to think that plot (time) and scenes (space), being very specific to narratology, have been used to construct the narrative meaning of and for the classroom. It is rarely the case. Also, those tools have long pertained to the panoply of cognitive science: segmentation of verbal protocols is made episodically where elements of time and space may be seized at the macrostructural level or at the microstructural, deictic level.

In the field of linguistics, the narrative approach does not fit into a definite typological textual framework. Its reports consistently mix argumentative and descriptive textual *genres* and the teacher's narrative is merely embedded in a descriptive discourse that occasionally takes on performative, prescriptive functions. Textual approaches of narrative macrostructures are going far beyond what seems to be used presently in the educational analysis of classroom narratives,

as far as methodological originality, rigor and coherence are concerned, as well as the subject's experience and integrity (see for example Labov & Waletsky, 1967). Indeed, leaving the privacy of the subject untouched may denote tact, respect, and consideration. In contrast, should it be remembered that some narrative inquirers have assessment duties towards the subjects with whom they are said to chat non-hierarchically?

Thus the present use of the narrative in teacher education does not owe much to narratology, even though this affiliation is clearly claimed (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The interpretive aspects of personal stories become predominant, and the psychological claim takes on a major role. For example, Clandinin (1991) brings the concept of awakening through the narrative inner quest; the state of awakening is equated to a state of realization. Later in the paper, I will emphasize the risks that a covert generalization of self-realization concepts might imply. Here I suggest some of the benefits of keeping to a closer use of narratologic tools in the analysis of personal texts. Indeed, as a sort of unsystematic model of thinking, the narrative approach in education does not really use the potentials of narratology. Narratology is based upon the main research frameworks regularly used in literacy; *story grammars*, *actantial analysis*, the *semiotic square* (Greimas & Courtés, 1989) and *narrative frame analysis*; and *focal analysis* (Genette, 1983; Todorov, 1984; Eco, 1988). It is argued here that using these semiotic tools in case studies and in the approaches of personal and professional development might eliminate part of the risks associated with the unreflected implementation of reflexive approaches and their psychologism.

Story grammars

A grammar is a tool for analyzing regularities in a text (the word "text" includes any verbal utterance that is seen or heard). A story grammar is a special case of textual grammar: it is used for a specific type of text, that is, the narrative. It is an analytical tool of narrative texts' superstructures. Story grammars are content-specific, intentionalized organizational patterns that refer to the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic modelling of a story, as well as to the knowledge of that model that the person brings to bear. They imply a knowledge of the types of regularities shaping narratives. These analytical tools shed light on the textual and mental model of the narrative. A story grammar has three components (Van Dijk, 1973):

a) a *syntax* that specifies categories and their symbolic form, theoretical axioms and rules for well-formed instances, instantiation or transformation rules from axioms.

b) a *semantic* that defines possible interpretations of syntactic instantiations and relationships, and their abstract representations.

c) a *pragmatic* that characterizes intentions related to the context of application of the grammar (how narrative discourse becomes functional and situated).

The grammar may distinguish the level of narrative performance and the level of narrative competence. Story grammars often use formal logic, and characterize predicate signs (relations and properties) and arguments signs (individual objects). They involve primitive terms of the

language, specific terms of the domain, building rules specifying correct sequences, transformation rules to define change and the dynamics of the story, a set of axioms or basic grammar rules constitutive of the grammar and belonging to the story system, and a set of technical symbols representing syntactic variables and constants. It may at first seem that such a rationale could not account for aesthetic aspects of the story such as metaphors. But symbols may also be used for representing unifying metaphors, basic metaphoric nodes constitutive of the narrative.

Also, basic aspects of story grammar are easy to use in a collaborative relationship. For example, Greimas's story grammar lays the necessary conditions for storying events, beginning with the least complex, logical model possible (Ricoeur, 1989). Actually, no story grammar has been developed up to now in order to analyze life stories and case studies. But such an analysis might well represent a grounded approach to personal texts. Diverse forms of analytical grammars are used in literacy to illuminate superstructures and functions in a story: the *actantial analysis* (analysis of the active functions in a story), the *narrative frame analysis*, the *analysis of focus* and the *semiotic square analysis* may all provide useful knowledge to the narrative collaborative inquirers. They are possible ways of deepening the personal knowledge-making process of narrative inquiry.

a) The actantial analysis

The actantial model makes it possible to analyze active semiotic components of the human imaginary. Stories may be decomposed into a sequence of narrative propositions shedding light on functional narrative transformations. The actantial model has been proposed by Greimas in the sixties. Actantial transformations are produced by syntagmatic (sequential) and/or by paradigmatic (associative) disjunctions. Two basic narrative propositions occur frequently, these being a subject-object relation: F(S-->O); and destinator-object-destinate relation: F(D1-->0-->D2) where F defines the semiotic function. This simple grammar allows the analysis of narrative functions in a text inasmuch as they constitute the active forces of a plot, around which subactants (adjuvants and opponents) interact. The model is an abstract of Propp's (1928) folktales morphology. The *subject* seeks the *object* of her/his quest; s/he is helped, or opposed, by *adjuvants*, *opponents*, who/that act directly on her/him. Also, actant forces may be abstract or natural forces (an opponent may be the wind or a lack of time). The *destinator* is the one (or the feature, or the event) responsible for initiating the quest to happen; the *destinate* is the sought-for actant, the actant to whom/which the quest is destined. Thus the actantial model provides an analytical tool easily applicable to novels, narratives, and also to personal stories, and myths. Its analytical structure may be mapped in this way (figure 1):

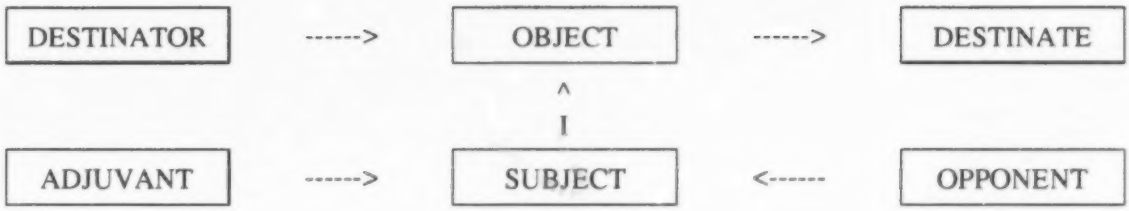

Figure 1
Greimas's analytical model of story actants

Actants in a story are like grammar functions: they constitute basic organizers of events. The actantial analysis sheds light on the role of the active functions in the story. They may be humans as well as objects having a symbolic function. The five active functions may be used to analyze any human event: define who is the SUBJECT, the purposive OBJECT of the personal quest, OPPONENTS (problems) and ADJUVANTS (helps or helpers) acting directly on the Subject in her/his quest of the object. The DESTINATOR will be the object or the person causing the quest to begin, and the DESTINATE will be the object, feature or person to which/whom the object of the personal quest is destined. According to Greimas (1973), many stories obey these basic narrative dynamics (note that in contemporary novels, some actants appear as anti-actants: anti-hero or anti-subject when the subject rejects its own attributes, and so on). It is argued that this analysis might help practitioners frame their action, purposes and problems, without the presuppositions of a more psychoanalytical use of symbolism. For example, Michael, a middle school teacher, noticed that when he gives his classes, plans are never adhered to. He was still taking a lot of time to plan, but the more he did, the less it worked. Defining his situation in terms of active functions, he started determining his object as being planning, as demanded by the school (destinator) in the interest of pupils (destinates). His opponents were time and adaptation. His adjuvants were his thematic projects because they adapt to any classroom situation. By reflecting on the object of his quest, Michael started to perceive that his object was not well defined. Actually, his purpose was not really "planning", but pupils' work and motivation. Further reflection on his opponents and adjuvants made Michael conceive a new way of planning where adaptive thematic projects helped accomplish his actual object: lively work motivation in the classroom. Thus, this semiotic tool was useful for Michael as a means for problem solving. Now, here is the way Sue reflects on a similar situation in her diary, and her actantial analysis of the situation.

> *My Achilles' heel in teaching is long term planning. I am already a very poor planner in general; I like to do whatever I feel like doing at whatever time I feel like doing it. To me, long-term planning is like wearing handcuffs: it subdues the beast and makes it controllable, but it is highly irritating. At best, I might plan for two or three consecutive classes, but beyond that, I am a dismal failure. A few times when I have undertaken sizable projects, especially in Social Studies, I have been forced to write an outline of a plan. I know, and I've been told by many persons, that to plan for an extended period of time is a time-saver in the long run, but it doesn't seem worth it to me for the amount of*

time it takes initially. I'm happier taking things one day at a time, seeing how things go, trying this, trying that, rather than following a recipe, a plan! By the way, I hate schedules too, though they are extremely practical. I have never, in my life, been able to stick to a schedule for very long. By that, I don't mean being at work on time or meeting deadlines (give or take a day or two), but doing the same things at the same time, day after day, week after week. I am a free spirit, I need air and space, not handcuffs, chains, plans and schedules. (Sue's diary)

Figure 2
Forcing a square peg into a round hole

b) The narrative frame analysis

The importance of *plots* and *scenes* has been emphasized in the literature on educational narrative (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). The notion of *plot* is instrumental in story grammars (Kagan, in press). The plot links the actors, their actions, their goals and intentions, and circumstances inside one unity of time. The plot provides an organisational configuration that applies in a systematic sequence. This general narrative blue-print is prototypical and may be readily noticed during reading. There is generally an initial setting of narrative forces that is disturbed by an actant. The imbalance results in a quest up to the point where stability is recovered through the actions of major actants.

Many traditional narratives are built on basic movements such as INTRODUCTION - DECLENCHING EVENT - DEVELOPMENT - TRANSFORMATION - CONCLUSION (Mandler, 1982). Pointing out these dynamics of action as they occur in the classroom might bring a teacher a better understanding and control of these phases. For example, Irene noticed in her classroom that some events were bringing positive or negative transformations depending on their nature. They were often the pretext for important transformations in classroom relationships. She learned how to notice these plots and use them as pivots of positive transformations. Irene did so by grounding all further classroom activities in the key plots. Thus, this semiotic tool was useful for

Irene as a basis for classroom decision making. A better understanding of classroom dynamics made it possible to direct transformations, and effectivelyo articulate conclusions as being introductions for new developments.

c) Focal analysis

Whereas the *story* is a set of narrated events, the *narrative* is an oral or written discourse reporting these events. *Narration* is the fictive or real act producing this discourse, the telling-act itself. There is a time and a space for *narration*; it differs from the oral or written time and space represented in the *narrative*, which may itself enclose another time and space: the ones of the reported *story* (Genette, 1983). The storyteller's viewpoint provides the focus of a narration. For example, the author may produce a fictive narrator in a time and place x telling the story of a time and place y. Thus the narrator (or storyteller) may be a character in the novel. The narrator may also be said to be omniscient and provide information on past-future relationships among characters as well as on their private thoughts. This is present in the narrative as an embedment of focuses (Bal, 1981). Space/time focuses are narrative aspects that provide information about how an author situates him or herself towards his/her production. The analysis of the focalization aspects (or the viewpoint) reveals subtle intentions that implicitly support the repartition of roles, of characters, which in turn influences the entire plot and decription of scenes. This may apply to educational narrative too. The narrative utterance is a selection of constrained information in a set focus: meaning is expressed as long as situations authorize it. In the outward focus, the subject is submitted to external focuses and may lose control on her/his own role. In the inward focus, where the author is assimilated into a character, the narrator is gathering all perceptions, even those which concern him or her as an object. Here is an example, in Sue's diary, where the narrator is quite distinct from the author.

> *Dear Diary, let me introduce myself. I am Oscar, Sue's cat. Please don't be alarmed. Sue is fine... I have simply gagged her and tied her to a chair. What could have motivated me to take such drastic measures? And why am I, her tabby cat, her devoted friend, writing in her diary? All shall be revealed, trust me. As a cat, I enjoy the privilege of going where I please, of eating and sleeping when I please and generally doing what I please when it pleases me. I also happen to please my mistress very much and she whispers all her secrets to me. I am usually very close-mouthed and an excellent keeper of secrets, but I had to break my silence. You see, enough is enough!*
>
> *She happened to leave the last pages of her diary on a table for a few moments before tucking them into an envelope, so I had a rare opportunity. I've always been extremely curious (as cats are wont to be) about this diary and have asked her repeatedly to mention me in her entries. Well, those unattended pages were just too tempting, so I hopped up on the table and proceeded to read them. As you can imagine, this took a good deal of time and effort, and I had a great deal of trouble turning the pages. But it was certainly worth it. Don't believe a word of those last pages!*

Sometimes I think I know my mistress better than she knows herself. I have always suspected this to be true, and now my suspicions are confirmed. How can she say that the traditional method of instructing children has not harmed her? Surely she was wearing her rose-colored glasses when she wrote that. I am here to set the record straight because I know what happened, I was there!

Focal analysis is basic to narratology and offers another way of shedding light on narrative regularities and uncovering a story's superstructures. The narrative focus reveals the place of the narrator in the story. The viewpoint may be particularly complex and subtle: the perspective of the narrator may appear in the "deixis" (the expression of relationships to time and space) and in pragmatic modalities (the expressions of doubt, anxiety, probability). Focal analysis may help in clarifying one's point of view as a living actor: is one's point of view the one which was read or heard -and then it is just intra-narrative (the subject is rooted in the social story)- or does it come from a feeling of identity beyond the narrative, beyond the personal? For example, Michael, a teacher, had a tendency to model his thoughts on his readings, and his readings never kept to reality. Up to a point, he wanted reality to conform to his models; but he realized he was being shaped rather than shaping his own life. Analyzing his focus made him aware that his life lay beyond the narrative. He stopped acting as if the story was imposed upon him, remaining just a character in the social play. His point of view became somehow extra-narrative. When being simply authentic in situations, he was bringing more energy to his pupils. Now Michael stays more focused on authentic experiences rather than on the prescriptions of a book. As a semiotic tool, focal analysis was for Michael a step towards not needing tools anymore. He forged the path, and was not guided through it. Eventually, there was perhaps no path; he just made his own decision.

d) The semiotic square

The semiotic square (figure 3) is a logical tool that clarifies basic aspects of a story. This achronic tool sheds light on narratives in terms of their conceptual orientations translated into a spatial, relational frame of semantic contrasts. It works like a taxonomy, as a system defining four poles of mutual relationships. Dynamically speaking, the constituent relations of the taxonomic square are *regulated operations* through which meaning is produced or "plotted". Thus, a semiotic analysis of constitutive relations illuminates transformation processes defined by semantic poles and the syntactic operations among the poles. The four poles determine *knowledge positions* that frame story segments concerning either the action or the being of a character (Greimas & Courtés, 1989, p. 571):

-true (= being + appearing)
-false (= not being + not appearing)
-secret (= being + not appearing)
-delusion or lie (= not being + appearing)

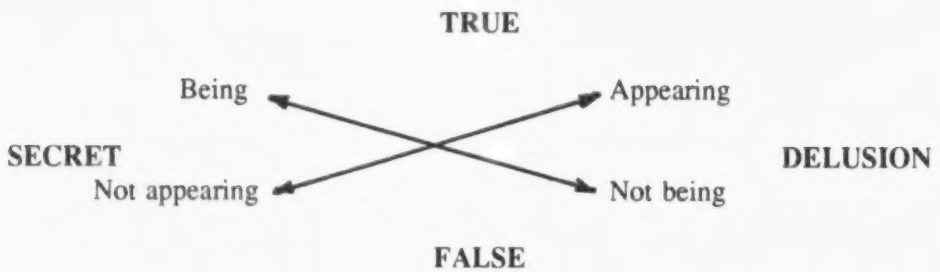

Figure 3
The basic semiotic square (Greimas, 1973, p.165)

The categorical terms make it possible as well to determine states of being and characters in terms of their truthfulness (or *veridiction*). In a simple narrative, there is no distance between events and their knowledge. But knowledge of events may be dissimulated or disseminated in the narrative, and the level of truthfulness of events and characters has to be discovered by the reader. Knowledge of the degree of plausibility then becomes a *narrative pivot* for understanding the true coherence of the text (that is the isotopy: the level of coherence binding meanings within a text).

The basic assumption supporting the semiotic square is that any meaningful micro-universe may be analyzed in terms of binary implications and contrasts. Their understanding is a useful tool for discovering the underlying forces of a text, as well as of any socially constructed meaning. For example, a teacher may spot relationships between educational action and the paradox of guided-autonomy (figure 4). The semiotic square analysis may help him or her understand that Voice may be the expression of individual actualization at best, but it may also be the expression of adherence.

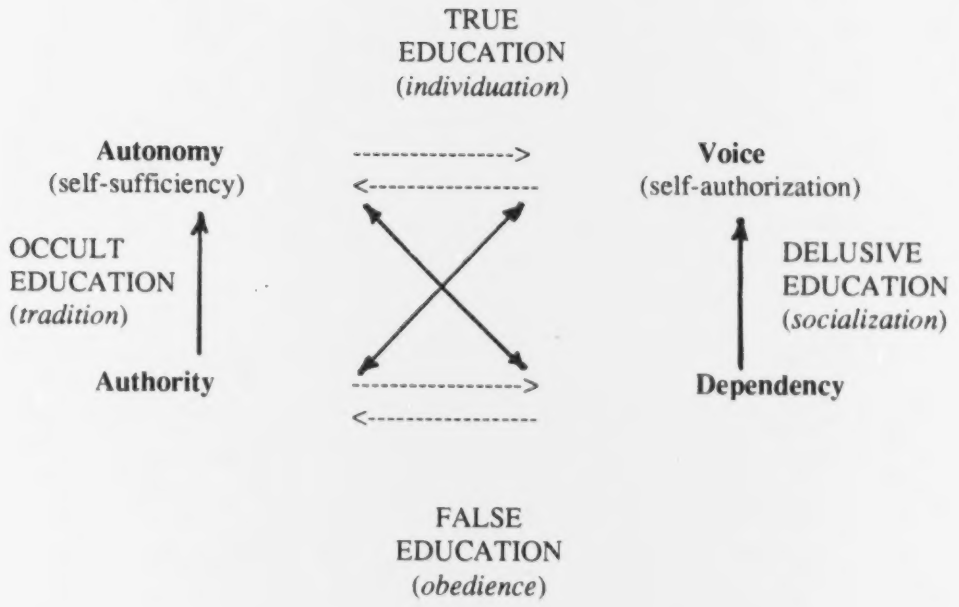

Figure 4
An application of the semiotic square to education

(Where ---> is implication and <---> contradiction)

Semiotic tools: Limits of the narrative method

Semiotic tools of narratology provide a framework for the analysis of texts. They are not a goal in themselves. They do not necessarily imply a psychological approach to the person or the help of someone else. Personal deconstruction sheds light on implicit superstructures of meaning, and may be socially critical. Such tools are relative and do not represent an absolute; they leave the individual free to follow her/his own path.

The narrative approach has brought about the idea that making meaning is the purpose of story making, and that individual accomplishment is reflected in the story people build around themselves. This might be true in some cases, but one might wonder whether life is lived in stories or whether story is not just a pretext for communication. The communicative aspect has its value; but experience is probably wider than that which may be captured through story

creation. A non-narrative type of meaning can be found beyond stories. Thus one might as well take the stance opposite the narrative one. Say that story cannot capture the full value of time, of space, and of being and its dynamics, that no word reaches the ultimate meaning, that there is no path to it. Because speech separates mind and experience, separates the subject and the object, a narrative quest may increase the distance to this inner identity. At an extreme, by developing say conceptual submission to the said collaborative interpretation of the narrative inquirer, the narrative approach might cause greater problems than it was intended to solve.

Therefore the deconstruction perspective implies a revolution in the way we conceive methods. In a functional way, as perceived in Post-Modernity, methods should not implicate an ideological conformity. An eclectic plurality of methods is needed to expand meaning to idiosyncratic virtualities. Methods in Post-Modernity are considered epistemologically anarchistic (Feyerabend, 1975), they help in finding truths other than the ones endorsed by the initial theory.

Semiotic tools are proposed here for deconstructing conceptual habits. In a short time, narrative has become another educational habit and a conformity network. Semiotic analysis might be used for discovering meaning and unraveling the network of ideological conformism underlying educational stories. These analytical tools should not be taken as goals in themselves. Their purpose is to be meaningful, but they have no pretention of transmitting a state of inner presence.

These limits must be mentioned because, in educational practice, a series of contradictions arise. Some libertarian educators impose a journal-keeping practice whose stated purpose is to help teachers realize their autonomy; these teachers may immediately cease to attend their education classes and their educator has no choice but to administratively accredit their unexpected self-sufficiency (Gitlin, 1990). In an other educational site, some researchers guaranty anonymity to the studied teachers, so as to favor confidence and fulfillment through writing, but the teachers suddenly want to be expressively considered as co-authors of the papers in which they participated (J. Shulman, 1990). One "autobiographied" teacher became the target of intimidations among her colleagues who reprobated her star-image after her narrative case-study had become a best-seller (Bullough, 1989). In preservice education, student teachers spend white nights filling a compulsory diary having replaced list-making of objectives. In classes, the traditional "tell me about your last vacation" has become "keep your personal journal". K-3 kids keep a journal. K-4, K-5, K-6 kids have journal-keeping practice too. What is written in middle school? Answer: A diary. In so many high schools, every day starts, after the prayer or the national anthem, with "Dear Diary...". In social education, in teacher education, each one spends hours keeping an exhaustive, exhausting diary. Researchers suddenly realize that journals they analyze are both empty and wordy, full of empty words: thinking is quasi absent, class contents are simply rehashed.

> *"You see, I've come to realize that much of what I've been telling you is simply factual, not really analytical or reflective. I don't think you want a synopsis of the week's event. I shall try to go one step futher, or deeper, as the case may be."* (Sue's diary)

The intensification of professional activities is such that few have time for deep thinking. At this time of uncertainty, some metaeducators latch on to narrative inquiry and promote the new wave: guiding the faithful to awakening. Would the quest for autonomy make it necessary to obey their principles, touted as a universally applicable method? Is it that with no narrative education, there is no awakening? The bottom-up innovative process would then, by a subtle shift, be manipulated from above. The procedural dynamics of change would be frozen in a dogmatic body of declarative do's and don'ts. These details are not unimportant to the central argument of the present essay. They raise the curtain on the hidden backstage of some new trends in narrative education.

Even though educators promoting autobiographical narratives have aknowledged the importance of autonomy in the knowledge-building process, they have actually formalized this autonomy into a method. **As soon as the method is generalized in teacher education, the generalization principle infringes on individuation processes**. In the case of narrative autobiography, it is most interesting to consider that this educational model is contradictory in its own paradoxical aim: stimulating autonomous awakening and self-liberation. Thus, the narrative approach might be invalidated through the arguments which served for its validation. Indeed, educational autobiography may at worst lead the violation of subjects' personalities, to a penchant for fantastic transpositions of reality, to some kind of schizophrenia. Or it may well be instrumental in imposing coercive methods, thereby handicapping alternative, differentiated paths suitable for some individuals. The narrative approach may bring teachers to become submissive to a particular educator. An educator may tell them how to think and articulate the criteria for their good thinking, and the criteria for their awakening as if those were generalizable. The stance of this paper is not that methods can or should be avoided. It is that methods are limitative by nature, and their use in a mediated so-called self-actualization may only be delusive (Table 1).

> *It touches on the very peculiar relationship that evolves between a journal-writer and a journal-reader. The more a person reveals her/himself in her/his writings, the more vulnerable s/he becomes emotionally and morally. When you let another person into your journal, you are letting them into head. What are the consequences? What is the price? For that reason, do you not think many if not all "forced" journal writing will be half-truths? Will reflect the writer's image rather than a true, objective image? I suggest that no matter how "truthful" and "accurate" one may claim (or wish) to be in one's autobiographical, confessional writings, these will always be, to a great extent, a creative work of fiction. If this is the case, then whom is the educator really speaking to? To the writer's representation of her/himself, then. Is that important to know? As a journal-writer, I can, at any moment, change my person, speak with forked tongue, if I wish to do so, in the interest of self-defense. Who in their right mind wants to be penetrated against their will, raped if you will? Besides, how true can your aim be if I keep moving the target?* (Sue's metacritical diary)

Of course, authors of narrative inquiry have argued about the risks, dangers and abuses of narrative and its "two-edged inquiry sword" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p.10). The goodness in storytelling is a point of present concern (Barone, 1992). But a deeper concern is related to

the essential nature of narrative inquiry itself. As expressed in the teacher education literature, narrative inquiry is meant to "probe into the participants' past and future", to penetrate deeply into "experiences, to trace the emotionality attached to her/his particular way of storying events", and by doing so, entering an affective community of thought to analyze with an educator the "ongoing experiential text" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989, respectively pages 11, 12, and 10). The educational experience is described as a means to reach a *universal meaning* (page 3); the narrative quest is then elevated to religious experience (in William James's terms). Elsewhere it comes on the couch of psychoanalysis, working on verbal imagery (Crites, 1975) and embodied image (Clandinin, 1985), "gathering up experiential threads meaningfully connected to the present" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989b, p.4). Narrative inquiry, as it is usually known in teacher education, focuses on individual psychology, and may become *narrative therapy* (Schafer, 1981).

Table 1. The use of personal narratives

Its possibilities	**And its risks**
-Developing a personal knowledge; -Theorizing practice; -Linking professionalism to experience; -Connecting the personal history and professional attitudes; -Generating dialogue; -Increasing listening; -Introducing the historical dimension in terms of identity on both individual and community levels; -Increasing the coherence of one's system of thought; -Improving mental balance; -Giving rise to a better self-perception; -Sharing experiences and building on common knowledge; -Finding life goals; -Suggesting action; -Promoting writing; -Enhancing the role of teacher educators as moral scaffolders.	-Psychologizing and psycho-analyzing development; -Becoming dependant; -Uncritically adopting implicit ideological norms; -Submitting oneself to a conformity network or a guide; -Pathologizing professional problems; -Developing verbal rather than true identity; -Developing egotism and/or delusory experiences; -Imposing institutionalized confessions; -Taking the narrative tools for the life goals; -Justifying inaction; -Justifying gossip as a sort of a criterial evaluation on its own; -Justifying salaries, and social parasitism.

Fundamentalists of educational narrative offer a psychic, "inner revelation" (quoting Dewey, 1934, pp.170-171), a traditional sanctity providing fundamental methods for personal and social growth (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989a, p.2). This fundamentalist perspective may be historically explained by looking at the Idealistic roots of pragmatism. Pragmatism developed a joint perspective of moral (say religious) development and functional action in a unitive, practical and goal-directed phenomenology. Also, William James (as well as Peirce) had been initiated to Vedanta. Vedantic monism places the unity of consciousness in a perspective of an all-pervading, absolute reality. The "enlightened eye" of Eisner's qualitative researcher (1991), the "authenticity" aimed at by Rosen (1988), and the "awakening" of Clandinin and Connelly (1991) seem to

belong to the same Idealistic tradition. In this tradition, the growth of the Self arises from master-disciple relationships and dialogue in a community of thought sharing a common ideology. We may find traces of it in excerpts of papers advocating the growth towards Personal Unity: "Unity means the union in a particular person in a particular time and place of all that he (sic) has been and undergone and of the tradition which helped shape him (sic)" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989a, p.4). In this tradition, education would be an initiation to *His-Presence*. Philosophically speaking, it is difficult to understand how this vertical, fundamentalist and traditional relationship can fit in with a horizontal, non-hierarchical collaborative inquiry.

Now, linking the experiential, meaning threads to this awakening appears even more problematic. Who does it and by what means? What is the unifying factor? Is it the community's discourse, tradition, or the individual Voice? The "tradition against the Logic of reduction" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1989a, page 7) may reveal itself more reductionist and interventionist than it claims to be. Unstructured interviewing and a researcher's experience-sharing implies stepping out of the usual boundaries in an interview setting. Whereas good semi-structured interviewers are those who speak the least, the narrative inquirer may be very involved in the conversation and may then interfere in the process in an implicit, normative way. For example, Enns-Connolly (1985, quoted by Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, pp.5-6) expresses personal concerns about what the interviewee said, and about death and survival. The advantages to that position lie in providing a shared feeling, for example, but there is also a clear danger of manipulating and indoctrinating the interviewee. Adopting objective ways of collecting data has been declared sinful by the Narrativor. But it may be advocated that the sin is attenuated if the method is applied to the data rather than exercised on the individual's emotions, methodically invading privacy and encroaching upon the identity.

Entering the field of personal analysis with another person is specific to the psychologist's and the physician's work. It is not certain that clear cautions have been issued to avoid well-known risks of counter-transfer, projection and identification so common in these matters. Psychoanalysts usually have coaching sessions among peers to clear out shifts in the analytical process. It is not clear if narrative inquirers are well-enough equipped to face cathartic awakenings. Also, the specificity of the pedagogical intervention may be lost and replaced by a grand orientation keeping the real problem of the teacher's self-sufficiency out of sight.

Post-Modern Relativism: An Anti-Story

Up to this point, it has been argued that a Self-constructionist perspective in education may lead to dogmatism and indoctrination, in the line of Idealistic "I"-philosophers. This becomes a major risk when methodic psychological tools are developed to make privacy public and to share a guided awakening. In contrast, let us analyze what a Post-Modern orientation could offer in the quest for reality. The arrival of Post-Structuralism was marked by Derrida's works on grammatology, speech phenomena and writing difference (1967). The Post-Structuralist theory of language is built upon the reversal of Husserl's phenomenology of language. In effect, Husserl considers truth as being an expression willingly lexicalized by utterers. Meaning, in Husserl's

theory of language, is conscious and intentional; it implies individual Voice. Truth is then intra-subjective and monologic in Husserl's acceptations. To this stance, Derrida opposes the dialogical reality of an intersubjective space that creates meaning through relationships rather than through the revelations of an inner time and inward Voice. In Husserl's terms, the inward Voice is adjacent to awareness; the seat of knowledge is already shared before being formulated into words. This viewpoint is proper to "I"-philosophers, questioned by sociocritical trends whose key figures are Derrida, Gadamer, and Habermas (though anti-pragmatist), and Rorty.

In contrast with the unsubstantial presence of an inner Self, Derrida makes an Absolute of writing. Writing is a space where dialogue becomes atemporal and intention becomes self-sufficient whether the utterer is absent or even dead. For Derrida, there is a priority in writing over other aspects of language such as speech; and writing is the true level of language. The written sign is always received rather than sent, and the writer is reader, an interpreter of the written sign which then belongs to a culture. In that way, Derrida does not treat written signs like natural signs, and for him meaning is not located in any one mind (Harland, 1987). In Derrida's acceptation, beyond language there is only absence and emptiness, and the signified is merely an illusion, for the signified does not exist. The signifiers themselves are signifying, pointing to other cultural traces. Meaning is then produced by signifiers in motion, with infinite, unstoppable implications. Thus, meaning is never fully reached, because it is disseminated in language. Through dissemination, the Sign's real being reveals itself as an anarchical and unpredictable subversion beyond the writer's intentions and the social control. For language is entropic, it is in an everlasting unbalancing movement. Also, there is for this author no third term between Nothing and Being (like Becoming, in Kantian and Hegelian terms), because motion is mechanical. A mechanical motion cannot comprehend, and does not rise up in a synthesizing concept or an absolute Idea.

> *"Almost every day, I ask myself "Do I like teaching?" The reply varies from a definite NO to an uncommitted YES to an unconditional ABSOLUTELY. This all happens in a not quite conscious nor unconscious way (perhaps "mechanical" is the best way to describe it). It is my evaluation, on a daily basis. It is the only question that really matters, to my mind. One thing is for sure; if I loved teaching as much as I love writing, the profession could claim to own my soul. But such is not the case, nor will it ever be. But one has to earn a living, right?".* (Sue's diary)

In the Post-Modern concept, the world is language. Writing creates the categories of the world; it is grounded in arch-Signs which act as causal forces. The world itself is always a representation. Moments of Now are perceived after they happen, and present is always perceived as a Past. The absolute Present is deconstructed as an illusion; the atemporal dream of the present moment being apprehended only in terms of aftereffects. Matter becomes meaningful through configurations of differences that appear when their shape has been deconstructed by reflection. Thus, in reflection, patterns of formal differences may merge in a signifying meaning which has infinite and universal implications. This unfolding meaningfulness spreads out void; emptiness appears as an antidote to the self-oriented, goal-directed story of life. It is the end of the story.

As mentions Harland (1987): nothing would precede signifying. This Post-Structuralist stance is claimed metarational and metascientific.

Deconstruction is to understanding the impossibility of getting it right. It is not a method. Rather it appears to be a kind of situated wisdom, getting out of language and tradition and story. Deconstruction is a critical strategy implying radical transformations in the interrelations between knowledge and language. It does not rely upon an absolute truth. Rather, it is meant to unravel the power and authority at work in meaning and interpretation (Anderson, 1989). Deconstruction is politically active: it is intended to change the signifying process, to destroy the *fabula* of the expressed narrative, and expand its lack of significance and its relativity to ultimate implications. One ultimate implication is emptiness, at once beyond story and fully integrated into the story. There is no absolute in the story nor in story making; action takes precedence. There are just interpretive processes, slips and slides of meaning. Just language in motion. Thus narrative creates the delusion of manipulable knowledge and meaning, and it may prevent the individual from finding his/her own ultimate implication. Context and story undergo radical transformations through deconstructive criticisms. Deconstruction is not problem solving. With deconstruction there is neither an Absolute nor a path to some sort of awakening. There is no coach but the signs and interpretations. Knowledge is not at issue in the deconstructive process.

Metadeconstruction: An Ethical Criticism

People who work on Derrida's narratologic theory usually notice its similarity to some aspects of Buddhist philosophy. There was a story in the Madhyamika philosophy, about two opposed schools of thought. The first, nihilist school said: there is *nothing*. But the second school remarked: did you notice there *is* nothing? There had to be an *awareness* of nothing. The Madhyamika, Middle Path school does not take any definite position on these two points. It is said reality just *is* but there is nobody to check (Trungpa, 1973).

This seems a wise position to take concerning the possibility of Presence beyond the narrative. Any definite claim may mislead the seeker. And the circularity of words may delude, on the path to an ultimate meaning if there is one. As educators, we have no right to fix a definite path as the one and best way. This is not correct in any case. Some questions should be left as such because no words can give an answer.

However there is a risk in deconstruction itself (see Bruner's 1986 afterword). Pragmatically speaking, in order for meaning to be functional it must not only be aesthetical, it has to be ethical. The purposefulness of meaning necessitates a moral stance. This moral stance might be the critical one, in that a Post-Modern criticism denounces arbitrary power relationships. Meaningful power would become an ethic of action, respectful of individual differences. Not unrelated to the foregoing hypothesis about the sort of power that is socially meaningful are the multiple evidences in the recent literature on innovation that personal transformation in a teacher cannot be imposed by academic authority or/and ideological sharing communities (Thiessen, in press). A recent trend of innovation consists in planning implementations in the name of a

bottom-up, spontaneous field change; part of their promoters' work is to make the field people forget that this Idealistic concept is a top-down percolation. In contrast, deconstructing the top-down process would help dispel illusions and thwart disinformation.

But isn't deconstruction, inasmuch as it instigates the end of the story, a paradoxical vacuum-cleaning anti-system, implying idiosyncrasy beyond any type of generalisation? Then the deconstruction might nevertheless implicate a third element, a Kantian cue, an individual virtuality in the absence of permanence, something neither transcendent nor immanent at the junction of cultural writing and reading, of teaching and learning. It may suggest an underlying transformational process towards meaningfulness. In the push for a renewed pragmatism, one might then propose an ethical deconstruction using semiotic tools for reconstructing the possibility of an education free of dogma, respectful of individual differences.

> *"But what is wrong with teaching? For one thing, there are a lot of Politics in teaching, in the school system... In order for one person to get what they want, students' best interest is not always served. Is it in the best interest of the students to cause their teacher grief by giving her an inhumane workload? Is it in the students' best interest to allow an angry, disruptive child to torture the teacher day after day (kicking her desk, constantly whining about assignments)? Is it in the students' best interest to encourage them to think highly of themselves (self-esteem) and be content with themselves at the expense of discipline, self-discipline, good manners, and plain old respect for others?? Is it in the students' best interest to label a child as "special" and let her get away with unacceptable behavior, such as leaving the classroom when "things get too tough" or "she's feeling bad"? Is it in students' best interest for their parents to begrudge us our salaries and our vacations? Well, my tirade is spent, and Dear Diary, I say "arrivederci"."* (Sue's diary)

The importance of a critical approach to education has been emphasized throughout the present essay (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). The psychologism and neoromantic Idealism tend to transform the use of personal story into a free-lance psychoanalytic path. The potential risks of this path were suggested here as a conceptual submission; thinking through a conformity system subtly imposed through language; loss of individuality. The narrative system of thought may justify a lack of responsibility towards action. On that point, biography is perhaps more realistic than the narrative approach. Its ideological implications are fewer. Biography places action on a chronological line which may stimulate an evaluation by one's own self; the balance is then directed towards action.

Questions have been asked here from the perspective of knowledge rather than of affectivity. It is not meant that love, care and affection should not exist in an educational process. The everyday experience of numerous educators confirms the existence of precious moments when communication is uplifted. What is meant is that love, care and affection do not obey catch phrasees and guidelines. That attempts to construct systems based on such catch phrases, and guidelines have most of the time been translated into coercive evaluations and observation grids.

Because present education is a mass system, such catch phrases and guidelines represent a danger for individual freedom and difference. Each one has her/his way of expressing higher-level values.

In the direction of love, care and affection, sharing narratives of experience is certainly a progress, because it may enrich individual relationships. But the problem comes when so many people adopt narrative as a way of thinking. The tool becomes the goal, and the initial intention seems lost. Cliques are formed, and the approach is fixed in a doctrine. This is the reason why deconstruction has been emphasized here as a useful complementary process. Adopting an Idealistic stance should not be attempted without clear knowledge of its implications, maintaining criticism as a safeguard.

This essay has suggested the need to examine in detail the nature of Voices triggering veridictory assents in the narrative community. Investigations should be carried out with some degree of independence from what semioticians have called "the narrative ghost in the discursive machine" (Maddox, 1989, p.675):

> "The best way to cope with a world in which rivalry among the voices of veridiction is part of the normal course of things is neither with solipsism nor silence but by active cultivation of the critical competence to discriminate... Toward that end, semiotics can prove to be a valuable adjuvant, but only by acknowledging that, on a planet which, thanks to accelerating communication, is constantly shrinking like Balzac's *peau de chagrin* and is always destabilized by the discourses of mankind, theory must turn its attention from exclusive emphasis on retrospective classification of meaning effects to prospective calculation of the effects of meaning."

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